

Written Testimony for the
Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Health and Hospitals

Allison N. Ponce, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Yale Department of Psychiatry
Connecticut Mental Health Center

Home:
239 West Rock Avenue
New Haven, CT 06515

I respectfully submit this testimony to strongly urge continued support of the Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC) which faces serious threats due to proposed cuts to the budget of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

These proposed cuts would have a devastating effect on CMHC's clinical and research operations. If enacted, this proposal would have a significant impact on the Center's ability to continue to conduct groundbreaking research on serious mental illness allowing for innovations in detection and treatment of these conditions. The proposal would also create additional barriers to care for a population that already struggles to receive timely and adequate services.

Simply put, the cuts would reduce access to mental health care. Governor Malloy has been supportive of mental health issues in the past, but this current proposal would likely put hundreds of patients at risk by reducing opportunities for psychiatric services in light of the cut of psychiatrists who serve about 500 individuals. The cuts to research at CMHC would also limit the capacity of the center to offer many of the innovative treatments that are available through the research clinics.

CMHC is a national model of a public-academic partnership in mental health care. The proposed cuts would have a tragic impact on individuals with mental illness as well as those who seek to discover and provide services to enhance their lives and support recovery.

I strongly urge you to please restore the funding to CMHC. The proposed cuts would have an extremely negative impact on hundreds of individuals and the unique institution that provides opportunities for innovation and treatment.